



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

Office of Communications

703-248-5003
FAX 703-248-5146

EQUAL RIGHTS CENTER AND CITY OF FALLS CHURCH ANNOUNCE OF JOINT FAIR HOUSING INITIATIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Roy Thorpe, City Attorney City of Falls Church: (703) 248-5010

Reed Colfax, Attorney for the Equal Rights Center: (505) 983-1601

Dave Lasso, Attorney: (703) 760-1678

FALLS CHURCH, VA. – The City of Falls Church and the Equal Rights Center announced today the formation of a joint initiative to promote fair housing in the City of Falls Church, as part of the resolution of a fair housing complaint against the City, a local marketing firm, and three development companies. The complaint, filed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, alleged that the City's former practice of charging developers a per child fee could have potentially led to a violation of the Fair Housing Act. McWilliams/Ballard, Inc., Nova-Habitat, Inc., Waterford Development, LLC, and Waterford Development-Falls Church, LLC, have committed to make a financial contribution of \$120,000 to the Equal Rights Center to support a fair housing initiative. All parties deny violating the Act and have pledged to continue their efforts toward furthering fair housing in the City of Falls Church.

"We are very excited to be entering into this joint initiative with the City of Falls Church. We are optimistic that our joint efforts will do much to help municipalities across the country work with private developers while welcoming new families with children to their area," said Rabbi Bruce E. Kahn, Executive Director of the Equal Rights Center.

Dan McKeever, Falls Church City Manager, stated: "We look forward to working together to promote fair housing as this is a core mission of the City."

The initiative will provide fair housing advertisements in local newspapers, distributing fair housing materials and information to developers and marketers of multi-family housing in the City. The initiative will also conduct fair housing testing and will culminate in a one-day, free, fair housing conference in Falls Church. Conference topics will include, but not be limited to, a discussion of ways for localities to calculate and assess development-related fees that comply with the letter and the spirit of the federal Fair Housing Act. Under the initiative agreement, staff and management of the local developers and marketing company and representatives of the City of Falls Church, including Council Members and other elected City officials, will receive fair housing training from the Equal Rights Center on an annual basis over a two-year period.

Dave Lasso, of the law firm, Venable, LLP, who acted as chief spokesperson for the private companies, had this to say on their behalf: "All of us involved in this matter were pleased to see it resolved in such a positive way and we think this initiative will prove to be one more reason that Falls Church is a fine place to do business."

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